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Montana's Foster Parent

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Ann Burds Social and Rehabilitation Services Helena, Montana
836 Front Street
October - November '74

Dear Foster Parents:

Lately I've received some requests for a foster parent education course of some sort to be started on a state-wide basis in Montana. However, I can't justify even the initial steps until I've received more feedback from the people it will affect - foster parents, social workers, and prospective foster parents.

Are you, as licensed foster parents, interested in educational programs that could improve your role as a foster parent and/or upgrade the image of fostering in the community? Do you think such sessions should be mandatory in order to be relicensed? What suggestions might you have for course content? Would you be willing to speak to prospective foster parents about your own experiences in fostering? Do you feel that these sessions would be a waste of your valuable time? Do you think that educational programs should be the option of foster parents and welfare offices on the county level rather than establishing a state-wide program? Did you feel that at the time you were first licensed, more specific information about fostering would have been helpful before a child was placed in your home?

As social workers, do you see the need for such programs in your area? Would you be willing to spend some time working on program development? In what specific areas, if any, do foster parents (both licensed and prospective) request additional information about their role? Do you think some kind of education should be mandatory in order to be relicensed? For prospective foster parents? Are any educational sessions presently being utilized in your county? If so, to what extent?

And finally, if the question mark key on the typewriter hasn't worn out yet, I'd like to ask one more thing. If you're seriously interested in ways to improve foster care in Montana, will you please take a little time to jot down your ideas about what I've mentioned here and encourage others to do so also?

Thank you. Address your correspondence to me at SRS, Box 1723, Helena, Montana 59601.

Ann Burds

MONTANA STATE LIBRARY
930 East Lyndale Avenue
Helena, Montana 59601

a letter to the editor

Turner, Montana
October 28, 1974

Dear Ann and All Present and Potential Foster Parents:

We joined the State Foster Parents Organization because its a great place to meet other people with similiar concerns and problems and to share ideas for helping all our kids and us too.

In fact, after attending the Foster Parents National Conference in Spokane whose theme was "Love Is Not Enough" I wished we'd had such an opportunity when raising our older children. The workshops on everything from "Who Am I" and "Reality Therapy" to "Childs Rights" and "Child Abuse" were really informative and helpful to us in understanding our children and working with them. "The New Teenager" and "Cultural Problems" were especially helpful. And I guess I'll never forget the lady who said, "When dominant white male attitudes are so prejudiced, it is difficult for a non-white woman to escape a life of prostitution. If a woman is not considered to be an acceptable candidate for marriage, then what is she a candidate for? Too often non-white men too, reflect this attitude; they love sex but avoid marriage. Hopefully, this attitude is changing among the young. I guess the old prejudiced people will carry it to their graves."

My work with Foster Parents has reinforced my conviction that we must stop the planting and nurturing of human seed that no one wants to harvest. Because it is the little ones who suffer and they come to you so badly scarred and wounded, in mind, body and spirit. Even begging, "Please, don't be bad to me."

If you have room in your home and love in your heart, take a foster child to love and care for as your own. The real rewards are the events that each day brings like, "Mamma, I can read" and "I love you" and flowers left by your bedside and a little girl who hugs you with her one little arm and says, "You're not just my Mom you know, you're my fairy Godmother!" Its lots more rewarding than a full social calendar that is empty of real accomplishment.

Mrs. Barbara Hauge
Foster Parent in Turner, Montana

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NATIONAL FOSTER PARENT CONFERENCE

Now is the time to be making plans to attend the Fifth Annual National Foster Parent Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Dates for this conference are April 30 through May 3, 1975. I have received word from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare that 75% matching from Title IV-A service funds have already been approved for travel and per diem costs. So, it's not too early to contact your County Commissioners if you're interested in attending. Watch for further information regarding the program in a later issue of this newsletter.

MONTANA'S FOSTER PARENT MANUAL

No doubt, some people are questioning whether this manual really does exist! Let me tell you, yes it does but it is still in the printing process. Because 2000 are being printed, this requires time.

At one time I was kidding when I said the manual would make a nice Christmas present to all the foster parents - now I think that it looks like more of a reality. Sorry --- but I think it's worth waiting for!

M.S.F.P.O. MINUTES * * * *

The second meeting of the Montana State Foster Parent Organization was held on October 4th and 5th at the Outlaw Inn in Kalispell, Montana with Gil Alexander presiding until President John Lombardo arrived.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.

Treasurers report: $494.19 in the treasury.

Gill Alexander announced the acceptance of the Foster Parent Manual. This is being printed and will be sent to all foster parents soon.

Committee Reports followed:

Membership Committee reports that Aftercare will enroll and pay for all their foster homes to bring the total membership to almost double the present enrollment.

Program Committee: Next meeting to be held in Glasgow. This may be a two day meeting.

Finance Committee: No Report.

Legislative Committee: This committee is working on 1) Liability Insurance - We may be eligible for insurance through SRS. 2) Orientation: Programs set up state-wide for new foster parents. 3) Board payments: John Lombardo asked that three families from each district make a full months report on cost of caring for children in the different age groups. 4) Clothing allowance: Asking for a state-wide standardization. 5) Subsidized adoption: Committee is receiving information from all states concerning their handling of the medical payments. Chairperson, Arlene Lindsley, asked for ideas from all members.

Gil Alexander reported on board payments in Aftercare. They currently receive $150 monthly and are asking for $250. Institutions now receive $22.50 per person a day.

Gil also talked about learning centers to help kids coming out of institutions. He says they need some special needs filled that the public schools can't provide them.

Nominating Committee: No report.

Insurance: 49 families are now insured. We hope to have SRS money available next year so that all foster parents in Montana are carried.

Communication: Copies of a letter about foster friends group was passed out. This letter is to be published in local newspapers hoping to develop interest in starting Foster Friends groups state-wide.

John Lombardo passed out lists about choosing legislators and lists of candidates running in each district.

John announced that MSFPO is now a tax exempt group. This has to be renewed every five years. Exemption date is May 31, 1979. This tax exempt status does not apply to local groups.

The Scholarship is being presented by Ann Burds at the regional meeting in Denver.

The President announced an Executive Meeting in February or March. He talked about those running for MSFPO offices and suggested that the president and treasurer be closer together.

It was also suggested that we get the treasury up and think about sending one couple to the National Foster Parents Convention next May.

Also plans are in affect to start a MSFPO resource library.

A program on Parent Effectiveness Training was presented by John Carpenter. This is a 24 hour course and would train twenty people in each district. Ann Burds will write a grant proposal requesting funds to minimize the actual cost of the course for foster parents.

cont. - - -

A program by SRS personnel followed on "Agency Innovations in Foster Care".

Luncheon followed with Representative Bill Zimmer as guest speaker.

Jessie Schlinger introduced legislative representatives and discussion followed on the legislative interests of the group, such as funds for education after 18 years, training schools, liability insurance, board payments, and orientation programs.

A presentation on Separation and Placement followed; panel speakers were Dr. Wilder, Alice Morse, Marie Lombardo, and Jessie Schlinger.

Mary Gibson gave a short talk on Foster Friends telling what has been done in Flathead County to help foster parents.

Motion was made by Jessie Schlinger and seconded by Marie Lombardo that we apply for Parent Effectiveness Training. Motion carried.

May 17 and 18, 1975 will be the next MSFPO meeting in Glasgow.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessie Schlinger
Recording Secretary

WHAT IS FOSTERING?

It's giving without receiving-

It's providing patience and tolerance-

It's setting realistic limits-

It's offering a stable environment-

It's providing growth opportunities for children-

It's listening rather than lecturing-

It's having lots of energy and some extra room-

It's holding on when no one will, and letting go even when it hurts-

It's having a sense of humor and a big heart-

It's joy-

It's despair-

It's a challenge and a continuous learning experience

IT'S CARING

The sound of silence is deafening
As it falls around my ears.
No more do I hear their squabbles
Which ended up in tears!

The house is deathly quiet
Their toys are all picked up;
No happy teasing and playing
No yapping from their pup!

No running up the flight of stairs
To see who'd get there last;
And sliding down the bannister
Is all left in the past.

No water fights or kickball
Once played upon the lawn;
Like puff blows of the dandelion
All too soon are gone!

I long to tuck them in their beds
And listen to their prayers;
To fill my life with all their noise
And know somebody cares!

The sound of silence is deafening
When once the family's grown.
The noise and toys are packed away
With Mom and Dad at home.

I'd like to respond to the authour of "Unsound" - whoever that might be:

Your home need not be silent
because your own children all have grown
There's lots of kids waiting
for a home just like your own.

These are kids who probably
aren't as fortunate as yours
But, they like to make noise
and play with toys -

And they're waiting for someone
who will listen to their prayers.
They want to know
that someone really cares.

Don't wait for a grandchild
to fill your life with joy
Become a foster parent
to a lonely girl or boy.

A. B.

THANK YOU

A special thank you to Peg Anderson and all her Kalispell committee members for the great job you did in setting up the October MSFPO meeting. I've heard many favorable comments about everything from the printed programs to the chicken luncheon! We all appreciate your time and effort spent to make the meeting such a success.

MAILING LIST

If you know of any newly licensed foster parents who are not receiving this newsletter and would like to do so, please submit their name and address to me so that they will be included from now on. Likewise, if anyone is receiving this newsletter who does not wish to, please inform me and I'll remove your name.

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REGION VIII N.F.P.A. MEETING

The Region VIII meeting was held Oct. 4 and 5 in Denver with the Colorado State Foster Parent Assoc. hosting. There was a BBQ and rendezvous get togethers on the evening of Oct. 4 at the home of Mrs. Betty Tucker. There was a very good turn out from all over the region. Montana had 5 representatives present.

Saturday morning started out with speaker Mr. Elmer Choury discussing "Childrens Bureau Objectives in Foster Care". He also discussed setting up National Action for Foster Children Committees.

Speaker Mrs. Pat Beezley gave a very intersting talk with a question and answer period on the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect. This was not the everyday speach. She not only described signs of Neglect and abuse, (emotional and physical) but gave very good ways to help these children. Pat also told of her personal experiences with children she is helping at the center. Pat is also willing to conduct workshops. I think this is some thing that might be considered for a state meeting.

After lunch the SCFPA held their State meeting, while the other State offices met with Aubrey Kellogg and Ann Burds and went over the draft for the Application for Region VIII National Foster Parent Scholarship Award and Rules Governing Award of Scholarship. A few changes were made. I would like to say I think Ann Burds, John Lombardo and who ever else did the work on this draft did a great job.

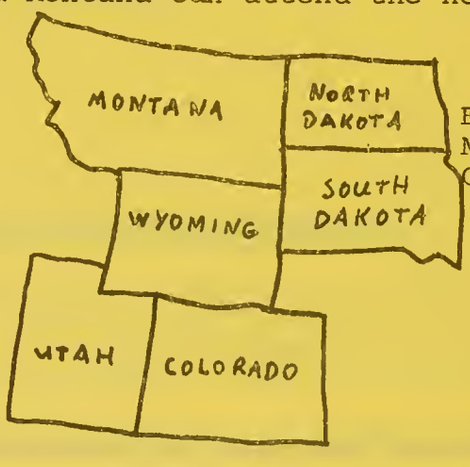
Aubrey Kellogg gave the Region VIII Report. The next meeting will be held in Denver with Wyoming as host.

The company that writes Peanuts is making a 30 minute film for the National Association and 15 spot lights on fostering for T.V. This will be some thing to keep watch for.

The next National Convention will be in Atlanta, Georgia, April 30 - May 3, Wednesday - Saturday.

I enjoyed the regional meeting, not only the workshops but visiting with other foster parents, social workers and interested people. We exchanged experiences, problems and some of the personal rewards of taking care of and loving all children. I hope as many, if not more people from Montana can attend the next meeting.

REGION VIII

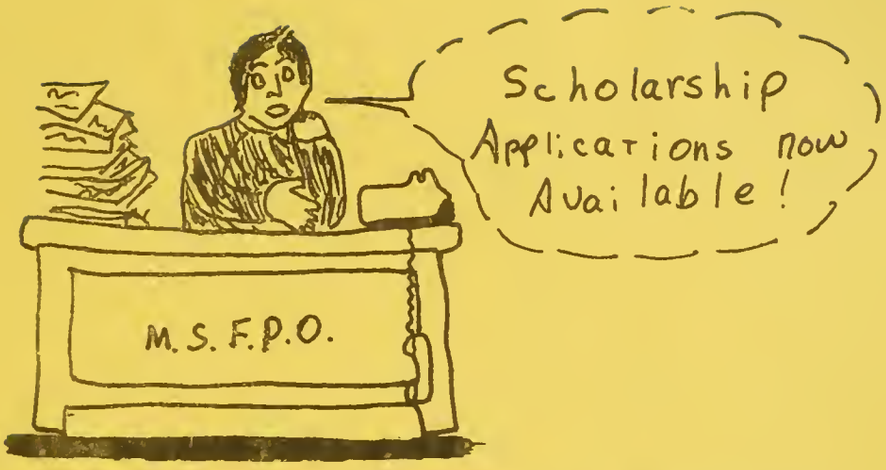


Edith West
MSFPO Vice-President
Great Falls, MT

What Happened ?

In February of 1974, Rep. Dick Shoup introduced a bill in Congress providing for the issuance of a commemorative postage stamp in recognition of foster family care. What has happened since then?

Rep. Shoup's legislation was only an initial step. Those supporting the bill, HR 12177, should now write to your Congressmen or to the Chairman of the House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, Congressman Thaddeus Dulskie, at the U. S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515. In addition, letters in support of the stamp should be written to Mrs. Mary M. Jamison, Secretary, Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee, U.S. Postal Service, Washington, D.C. 20260. WRITE TODAY!



The "Pres." Says:

Initially, I want to thank all those intrepid foster parents who attended our second MSFPO meeting last month in Kalispell. It was very well attended by foster parents and social workers throughout the state. Our theme was apropos to the season - politics - and our individual influence on politicians. I think we made some impression on the twelve candidates present. Some were unfamiliar with fostering, I hope we educated them. We discussed a number of issues; particularly board rates, clothing allowances and state payment of foster parent liability insurance.

I have offered the assistance and backing of our organization to SRS in their budget requests. In return, SRS was asked to help us in this legislative session to raise board payments, clothing allowances and pay for liability insurance.

Ann Burds will be writing a grant to the Office of Higher Education to request assistance in defraying the expenses of Parent Effectiveness Training program for foster parents in Montana. We should have more on this to report in the future.

We have made a committment to the National Foster Parent Association to assist in a scholarship fund of $500 to be drawn from the six Region VIII states. This will go to a deserving foster child from this region. Our share is $100 or $11 from each district. We will be asking the district representatives to help us collect this sum from their areas. Great Falls has already paid. Scholarship applications are now available upon request. Any foster parents who presently have a foster teen in their home who is interested in furthering his/her education, please write to me and I will send you an application. Deadline for all entries is February 1, 1975.

Looking forward to our next meeting in May 1975. Glasgow was overwhelmingly chosen as the site.

John Lombardo
MSFPO President
1934 Hauser
Helena, MT 59601

ACTION FOR FOSTER CHILDREN COMMITTEE IN MONTANA?

On November 6th, Mr. Elmer Choury from the Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Child Development - Denver mentioned the idea of starting an Action for Foster Children Committee in Montana while hw was visiting here. He presented the National guidelines for iniating a committee of this sort. According to these guidelines, an Action Committee is a core group of citizens who represent civic organizations and other individuals who are committed to helping their own community improve services for foster children and their families.

Before any definite decisions are made, we are anxious to find out the foster parents reaction, ideas, etc. to such an organization. If you feel this would

be beneficial for Montana, or if you would like further information, please wirte or call.

State of Montana
Social & Rehabilitation Services
P.O. Box 1723
Helena, MT 59601

ATTN: Ann Burds

FIRST CLASS